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From: Rodriguez, Elias
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Subject: News Clips

Passaic Valley water utility issues lead advisory after detecting elevated levels

NOVEMBER 5, 2015, 6:26 PM

BY RICHARD COWEN

THE RECORD

The Passaic Valley Water Commission has issued a lead advisory to its customers, after elevated levels of the metal were detected in more than 10 percent of the lines tested during a recent sampling.

The water commission routinely samples its customer lines for concentrations of lead. In the most recent sampling of 107 lines, 12 of them were found to have lead concentrations exceeding 15 parts per billion, the federal government’s maximum allowable level.

“Anytime that more than 10 percent of the samples exceed that level, we are required to send the advisory to our customers,” said Joseph A. Bella, executive director of the water commission. The advisory is being mailed to homes this week, he said.

Bella said the water commission has notified all 12 customers who were found to have elevated levels of lead and offered to remove any lead connector lines to their homes.

The advisory, the director said, has nothing to do with a survey that the water commission sent to customers last month seeking public input on a plan to construct two, 2.5-million gallon water tanks at the Stanley M. Levine reservoir, located on the edge of the Paterson-Great Falls National Historical Park.

High concentrations of lead are considered a health risk, particularly to infants, young children and pregnant women. Lead gets into the drinking water primarily through old pipes. When water has been sitting in the pipe for several hours, lead deposits build up.

After it is ingested, lead is stored in the body and can lead to various health problems. High lead concentrations can lead to brain damage, kidney problems, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells, which carry oxygen to the rest of the body.

The advisory says people should flush the tap when they get up in the morning or any time the line hasn’t been used for several hours. Bella said running the water for 30 seconds to two minutes, until it is cold, should flush the line.

This is not the first that the Passaic Valley Water Commission has issued a lead advisory. The utility primarily serves Clifton, Passaic, Paterson, Garfield, Lodi and North Arlington, older municipalities where many of the homes and commercial buildings contain pipes and fixtures with lead.

The standard treatment for lead is to add phosphates to the water; the phosphates coat the lead pipes and inhibit lead from dropping into the water.

But that approach is not possible for the the water commission, which stores its treated drinking water in open-air reservoirs on Garret Mountain. The phosphates promote algae and bacteria growth when they interact with sunlight and thus cannot be used, Bella said.

Storing treated drinking water in open-air reservoirs has been deemed a health hazard by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, because of concerns for potential by birds and wildlife droppings. The EPA has ordered the water commission to come up an alternative to storing drinking water in open reservoirs, either by building tank farms, covering the reservoirs, or building new treatment plants.

The water commission’s plan to satisfy the EPA mandate by building tanks at the Levine, New Street, and Great Notch reservoirs has drawn harsh public opposition. The survey, which is available online at pvwc.com, has gotten more than 3,000 responses so far, according to Joseph Getz, the water commission’s consultant.

Firefighters battling 7-alarm blaze at Paterson armory; several schools closed

NOVEMBER 10, 2015, 10:27 AM

BY STEFANIE DAZIO

THE RECORD

STEFANIE DAZIO/RECORD STAFF/ The Paterson armory has been burning since 11 pm last night. Firefighters continue to battle the blaze this morning.

PATERSON — Firefighters are battling a seven-alarm blaze at the city-owned armory this morning and the building will need to be demolished to get the fire under control.

"We're not going to be able to put it out unless we can get in," Fire Chief Michael Postorino said. "The whole neighborhood's not safe with the building like this."

BILL TOMPKINS/SPECIAL TO THE RECORD / The Paterson armory has been burning since 11 pm last night.

Residents who live in surrounding buildings have been asked to stay inside their homes with the windows closed or evacuate to a temporary shelter at the New Roberto Clemente Elementary School, Postorino said.

Several schools in the area are closed today due to the fire: Eastside High School, School 11, School 15, Roberto Clemente, New Roberto Clemente and Madison Early Learning.

Firefighters are pouring about 10,000 gallons of water per minute into the massive building, Postorino said as firefighting efforts continued for 12 hours.

Councilman Alex Mendez said the city had wanted to renovate the armory. "Now we're starting from scratch," he said.

The fire started about 11 p.m. in the armory's basement, which is about 25 feet deep, and burned through the floors and onto the armory's roof where flames are shooting through the top windows. Thick, dark smoke is pouring out and firefighters on ladders are trying to douse the flames.

Firefighters originally attacked the blaze from inside of the building but evacuated after it was declared unsafe. One firefighter was taken to St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center with a back injury, Postorino said.

The building, which is made of red brick and heavy timber, is 300 feet by 200 feet and 30 feet high, the chief said.

"You deluge it with water, hope at some point the water overtakes the fire," Postorino said.

About 100 firefighters from across North Jersey — including members of departments in Paterson, Clifton, Passaic, Little Falls, Haledon, Paramus, Ramsey and Wayne — have been involved in the firefighting efforts. The Passaic County Prosecutor's Arson Squad is investigating.

The Passaic County Department of Health is monitoring the area's air quality as smoke continues to pour out of the armory and the state Department of Environmental Protection is at the fire..

At one point, green flames were shooting out of the roof, which Postorino believes might have been copper burning.

There is a light drizzle coming down, which won't help firefighters. "It makes things slippery," he said.

It's too early to decide if the building will be demolished, he said. "We don't even know what's still burning."

A new shift of Paterson firefighters took over at 8 a.m.; those who had been at the blaze since Monday night were released.

The armory is bordered by Market Street, Pennington Street, Rosa Parks Boulevard and 17th Avenue. Completed in 1895, the armory was used by the New Jersey National Guard until the 1980s. For a brief time it was used to store military memorabilia but then the property was taken over by the city after the owner didn't pay property taxes.

Enrico Caruso sang there, Clarence Darrow spoke, Joe Louis fought and Republicans rallied for Dwight Eisenhower.

In 2012, Mayor Jeffery Jones said he wanted to form a private-public partnership to raise \$9 million to \$12 million to repair the armory and turn it into a regional sports destination or event space. But those plans never came to fruition.

Passaic River cleanup has doubters on all sides

November 10, 2015

By SCOTT FALLON

A final cleanup plan for the lower Passaic River is expected to be issued by federal authorities shortly, but because it is already a year behind schedule, some environmentalists now say they fear the cleanup will be scaled back from the bank-to-bank dredging of toxic mud originally envisioned.

That plan, with its cost of \$1.7 billion, has generated considerable debate from federal lawmakers who praise it,

environmentalists who say it doesn't go far enough, and dozens of companies responsible for the cleanup who want a smaller, cheaper version. If enacted as is, the project would be the costliest Superfund cleanup in U.S. history.

Announced in April 2014, the plan was supposed to be finalized by early 2015. But the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was inundated with hundreds of comments on the plan, causing the delay, an agency spokesman said Monday. The comments range from one-page emails to a 1,300-page report from some of the companies that inherited the site's liability.

"It became a very lengthy process of analyzing and responding to the comments in detail," said David Kluesner, an EPA community liaison who has worked on the Passaic River plan for years.

Officials at EPA's regional office overseeing New Jersey and those at its headquarters in Washington are still deliberating the final plan and will make it public by the end of the year or early 2016, Kluesner said. He would not comment on whether the plan would be altered.

Debbie Mans, co-chairwoman of a community group advising the EPA on the project, said the delay has given the 100 companies responsible for the cleanup time to lobby for a watered-down version.

"The longer it takes, the less confident I am in EPA upholding their promise," Mans said. "There has been too much time devoted to the polluters' concerns. The only folks who want to derail the process are the polluters."

The plan calls for 4.3 million cubic yards of toxic sediment — enough to fill MetLife Stadium twice — to be dredged from the lower 8 miles of the Passaic River, where the concentration of cancer-causing dioxin, PCBs, mercury and other industrial pollution is greatest.

It was introduced with great fanfare at a news conference that featured Sens. Bob Menendez and Cory Booker, and Reps. Bill Pascrell Jr., Rodney Frelinghuysen, Albio Sires and Donald Payne Jr. supporting it.

But the companies on the hook for the bill have been lobbying public officials along the river for a smaller cleanup for more than a year, saying the proposed plan would disrupt traffic and mass transit for years by forcing several bridges to open for barges.

The companies, from well-known Fortune 500 corporations to small local businesses, have been advocating to dredge 25 hot spots along 17-miles of the river instead of the bank-to-bank cleanup EPA has proposed.

A group of about 60 of the 100 affected companies has sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for documents that could show how the agency developed its plan.

The lawsuit, filed on Oct. 30 in federal district court in Newark, said the companies were not able to adequately comment on all aspects of the EPA's proposed cleanup. The companies argue that the "colossal scale and cost" of the proposed cleanup requires a more rigorous examination of alternative cleanups.

Congress must help save Long Island Sound

By NewsDay EDITORIAL BOARD

Updated November 8, 2015 4:24 PM

NewsDay

The effort to restore Long Island Sound has been underway for some time. But it's been chronically underfunded. Now, an updated plan has been produced by a group of federal, state and local officials, scientists and environmentalists. And it's a good one.

But it won't work without money to implement it. And that requires federal action. Our representatives in Congress need to stay focused on getting the proper financial support. They could begin by fighting to restore funding for the Long Island Sound Study back to the \$7.8 million the group received as recently as 2010. The Sound is too important economically and recreationally to let this work languish.

The comprehensive 20-year plan in the Long Island Sound Study has lots of good goals and steps to achieve them. They include restoring eelgrass and tidal wetlands, reducing closures of shellfishing areas and beaches, and conserving 3,000 acres on the Sound's coast.

That would build on the progress made so far. Nitrogen has been reduced by upgrades of wastewater treatment plants that dump into the Sound, a process monitored and enforced by the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Towns have implemented storm-water runoff programs. More than 1,600 acres of coastal habitat have been restored, and there is more eelgrass. But the new plan was released as the state closed or limited shellfishing in more than 670 acres in the Sound and North Shore bays. Clearly, more must be done.

Local municipalities should revive land preservation programs. But the Sound also needs federal dollars. Other estuaries of national significance get more. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and Reps. Steve Israel and Lee Zeldin have sponsored the right legislation. It's time to bring it home.

Half of surveyed oil train bridges are deteriorating, report says

Waterkeeper Alliance surveyed 250 bridges used by trains carrying volatile crude oil; there are more than 100K in the US

November 10, 2015 5:00AM ET

By Marcus Stern

Aljazeera America news

A pier of a railroad bridge over the Spokane River in Washington has missing cribwork and fill, according to a report by three environmental groups. Waterkeeper Alliance

A survey of 250 oil train bridges across America found that almost half showed signs of considerable deterioration, including missing or crumbling concrete, partially washed-away footings, rotted pilings and badly corroded steel beams, according to a report to be released Tuesday.

Determining whether the problems found by three environmental groups pose a threat to public safety is almost impossible, however, because the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) rarely inspects the nation's estimated 100,000 rail bridges, including some built more than 100 years ago. Instead the agency leaves that responsibility to the railroads, which don't make their inspection records public.

"Because the federal government has shirked its responsibility to regulate the safety of oil trains and the bridges they cross, we are shining a light on the need for immediate, independent inspections of all rail bridges that carry explosive oil trains," said Marc Yaggi, the executive director of the Waterkeeper Alliance, one of the groups that produced the report.

The Waterkeeper Alliance, which is dedicated to protecting watersheds around the world, was assisted in the report by two other groups also concerned about oil trains, Riverkeeper and ForestEthics.

The report, "Deadly Crossing: Neglected Bridges and Exploding Oil Trains," cited Department of Transportation statistics showing that bridge failures caused 58 train accidents from 1982 to 2008.

"The magnitude of the threat of an oil train derailment caused by a failing bridge to the surrounding communities, waterways and drinking water means that, even if rare, an accident could be catastrophic," the report said.

Ed Greenberg, a spokesman for the Association of American Railroads, who was unable to review the still unreleased report, said rail bridges in use today are capable of safely supporting oil trains, which can be more than a mile in length pulling more than 100 tankers loaded with 3 million gallons of crude oil.

"Railroad bridges are among the safest segments of the nation's infrastructure," he said. "Some bridges are painted. Others are not. Some are more weathered than others. But outward appearance does not indicate a bridge's safety. Inspectors scrutinize a bridge to assess its structural integrity, which is a thoughtful and thorough engineering process, with no relationship to whether the bridge is aesthetically pleasing."

No bridge collapse appears to have been involved in any of the 10 fiery oil train derailments that have occurred in North America in the past 29 months.

Greenberg noted that the environmental groups' report involves "observations by noncertified bridge inspectors," adding that the industry "follows an aggressive 24/7 safety-first process should a bridge inspector or train crew raise a concern about a particular bridge. That structure is immediately taken out of service until a qualified railroad bridge engineer examines the structure to determine its condition." If a safety problem is confirmed, "a process is in place to get crews to the structure to address the situation."

But there is no public documentation of this process, so the railroads aren't accountable to state and local officials. The FRA says Congress hasn't given it the authorization or resources to independently inspect rail bridges or to force the railroads to be more transparent.

Sarah Feinberg, the head of the FRA, has begun a campaign to get them to be more voluntarily transparent. Her efforts came after Milwaukee officials and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., tried unsuccessfully to get Canadian Pacific to turn over inspection reports on a 99-year-old steel bridge there, dubbed Old Rusty by locals. Concern was raised by news reports this spring that showed corrosion had eaten away the base of some of the bridge's support

beams.

A rail bridge over Normans Kill, a tributary of the Hudson River in New York, shows extensive cracking and major deterioration of concrete, including large chunks of concrete missing from the bridge's footings, according to the report. Waterkeeper Alliance

In September, Feinberg wrote a letter to hundreds of railroads, including Canadian Pacific, imploring them to be more open and cooperative, saying, "When a local leader or elected official asks a railroad about the safety status of a railroad bridge, they deserve a timely and transparent response."

After receiving the letter, Canadian Pacific agreed to discuss local officials' technical questions behind closed doors. But the railroad still rejected their requests to see the inspection reports. The FRA looked at the bridge and inspection reports and then declared it safe, without elaborating. By then, the railroad had already announced it would be repairing the bridge, including fortifying some of its corroded steel beams with concrete.

Canadian Pacific did not respond to a request for comment by time of publication.

Last week Feinberg took the additional step of warning the railroads that complaints about rail bridges are pouring into the offices of members of Congress who have then contacted the railroads and "are coming away unconvinced." If that continues, she warned, "Congress will ask us to step in more aggressively."

Matthew Lehner, the FRA's associate administrator for communications, said the agency won't comment on the Waterkeeper report until it is released. He said an earlier statement by Feinberg summed up her stance on rail bridges. In that statement, she said the FRA "has started re-evaluating the current bridge management program to identify what more can be done with its current, limited resources."

"We are committed to working with and engaging more local communities, elected officials and the industry to develop a strategy that will raise the bar on rail bridge safety to meet the nation's current and future transportation needs. The public has put its trust in the FRA to take smart and prudent action to keep them safe, and we will continue working to earn that trust every day."

The FRA receives complaints about the condition of railroad bridges almost daily, said an FRA official speaking on condition of anonymity in order to comment freely, and in most cases the problems turn out to be cosmetic rather than structural. However, the official said there's no formal procedure for adjudicating public concerns about rail bridges and no central record kept of complaints.

In January 2014, John Wathen, the "keeper" of Hurricane Creek in Alabama, posted a video of an oil train crossing a 116-year-old wooden bridge in Tuscaloosa. Some of the trestles supporting the oil train, 40 feet above public parks on either side of the Black Warrior River, were resting on posts that were rotted or had makeshift repairs of corrugated pipe and concrete.

The railroad and the FRA insisted the bridge was safe, but a year after Wathen posted his video and began calling attention to the condition of the bridge, the railroad that leases and operates it announced it would do \$2.5 million in repairs. It replaced many but not all the rotted pilings. Whether the bridge is safe is unclear because there are no federal engineering standards for rail bridges and even industry standards are silent about the number of defective pilings a rail bridge may have and still be safe.

In their new report, the environmental groups call for a "publicly available national inventory of bridges, a protocol for following up on citizen complaints and concerns and an enforceable set of standards to guide agency action and ensure the safety of railroad bridges."

The report calls on Congress to "give the FRA the legal and financial tools it requires to run a robust rail bridge safety program." If Congress fails to act, the report urges the administration to make changes "within the existing system — or outside of it at the state and local level."

Currently, states and localities are hampered in their dealings with railroads by a system that places most of the regulatory authority over railroads in the hands of the federal government.

That frustration is what led the Waterkeeper Alliance and Riverkeeper to deploy their legion of river, bay and creek "keepers" in kayaks and patrol boats to inspect rail bridges in watersheds across America. Over the summer, 21 "keepers" inspected 250 bridges within the watersheds of rivers like the Columbia, Snake, Hudson, Allegheny and James. They found and documented what they believed to be structural concerns with 114 of the bridges.

Pat Calvert, the "keeper" of the upper James River in Virginia, was one of them. Two years ago, before he knew about the dangers of oil trains, he was focusing instead on the threat of chemical and coal ash spills to the James. But on April 30, 2014, a CSX oil train derailed and set fire to the river a few blocks from his Lynchburg, Virginia, office.

A year and a half later, he still wonders how he missed the risk rising under his nose. He didn't realize the mile-long oil trains rolling along the riverbank might pose a public safety hazard.

"I didn't feel so bad when I learned most all emergency planning officials up and down that rail line also did not know [about the risk] and had not been contacted by CSX," Calvert said. "We were in some ways being duped by the industries that are involved in this."

Oil trains are a relatively recent phenomenon, arising from the surge in oil produced in North Dakota through hydraulic fracturing. The number of tankers transporting crude, much of it from North Dakota, rose from 9,500 in 2008 to almost 500,000 last year.

Jerry White Jr. is the "keeper" along the Spokane River in eastern Washington. Spokane is a chokepoint in the flow of crude oil from Canada and North Dakota to refineries on the West Coast.

White surveyed two rail bridges across the Spokane River and elevated tracks running over the streets of Spokane. Videographers Rosie Ennis and Joseph Comine documented White's findings. All three were shocked by what they saw, they said.

"On the city bridges, you've got rebar exposed under the concrete," said White. "On the bridges over the river, you've got footings that have actually begun to wash out so that the bridges have begun to settle and crack."

Comine said he's angry and frustrated that residents of Spokane aren't able to independently assess the risk from oil trains because the railroads shroud their operations and maintenance activities in secrecy, including prosecuting trespassers.

"It's really a case where large industry has crafted law and policy around keeping the community shut out of what's being transported through it," he said. "Before, I never even paid attention to trains ... But, wow, I really pay attention to them now."

NYT

Scientists Engineer a Plant to Reject Its Own Pollen

NOV. 5, 2015

Photo Scientists genetically modified a plant, right, to reject its own pollen and that of close relatives. Credit Noni Franklin-Tong

By SINDYA N. BHANOO

Observatory

Dispatches from the world of scientific research.

Field poppies do not self-pollinate, a strategy that helps keep the species' gene pool diverse. Now, researchers at the University of Birmingham in England have successfully transferred two genes from a poppy plant to a self-fertilizing plant called thale cress. The genetically modified thale cress rejects its own pollen and that of close relatives, the researchers report in the journal Science. The experiment may help researchers breed plants that are stronger than their parents and provide better yields.

NYT

Parenting

An Early Whiff of Dogs or Hogs May Lessen Asthma Risk

By Nicholas Bakalar

November 6, 2015 1:09 pm

Photo Credit Karsten Moran for The New York Times

Exposure to dogs or farm animals in early childhood significantly reduces the risk for asthma, a large study has found.

Researchers prospectively followed more than 650,000 children born in Sweden from 2001 to 2010. They recorded exposure to dogs and farm animals and assessed the risk for asthma in school-age children at age 6 and in preschoolers between the ages of 1 and 5. The study is in JAMA Pediatrics.

Compared with children who had no exposure to farm animals, the rate of asthma was 52 percent lower in school-age

children and 31 percent lower in preschoolers who lived on farms.

Living with dogs had a weaker effect. Compared with children without dogs, school-age children who lived with dogs had a 13 percent lower risk of asthma, and children 3 and older had a 10 percent reduced risk. There was no association of dog exposure with asthma in children under 3.

“Families that have a child shouldn’t worry about getting a dog,” said the lead author, Tove Fall, an associate professor of epidemiology at Uppsala University. She warned, though, that “if you have an allergic child, you shouldn’t get a dog and imagine that it will cure the allergy — it could make it worse.”

Although the researchers controlled for many factors, including parental asthma, other unknown variables could be involved, and the exact mechanism remains unknown.

POLITICO

Constitution pipeline could face year-long construction delay

By Scott Waldman 5:07 a.m. | Nov. 10, 2015 1

ALBANY — If the state doesn't approve permits soon, a proposed natural gas pipeline in the Southern Tier and Schoharie Valley could be delayed another year, the project's developers say.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation has been sitting on water quality permits for the Constitution pipeline and has not given a timeline as to when a decision will be made.

On Monday, Constitution spokesman Christopher Stockton said the company would need to begin clearing trees for the pipeline before the end of the year to finish by April. That narrow window in the winter months is the only time the tree clearing can happen so that it doesn't interfere with bird migration, he said.

If state approvals don't arrive soon, project developers will be forced to push back construction until next fall, when the tree-clearing season is again open, Stockton said. The pipeline's expected in-service date would then move from 2016 to 2017. It would bring gas fracked in Pennsylvania into New York.

In a call with investors late last month, Dan Dinges — CEO of Cabot Oil & Gas, one of the project's developers — said the only hold-up is the state's decision on water quality permits. Cabot is a developer along with WGL Holdings, Williams and Piedmont Natural Gas Co.

“Further delays in issuing the final permit risk the project's 2016 in-service date, which means New York energy consumers will have to wait another full year to receive relief from the extraordinarily high energy prices seen during the heating season,” Dinges said.

The 124-mile Constitution pipeline will cross through Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Schoharie counties.

Environmental groups have objected to the pipeline, saying it could potentially endanger bodies of water and marks an expansion of natural gas infrastructure they want to limit.

Community groups and landowners have also pointed to the hundreds of thousands of trees that would be cleared as a result of the project. Some landowners have already been taken to court by the developers after refusing access to their property.

On Monday, DEC spokesman Sean Mahar said the state was coordinating with federal agencies to make sure water

resources and wetland benefits would be protected by the construction of the proposed pipeline and that adverse impacts would be avoided or mitigated.

"Pursuant to the Clean Water Act, DEC must act on a water quality certification application within a reasonable time," Mahar said. "DEC continues to carefully review the application for the Constitution Pipeline, and is working with the company to ensure its project proposal will not adversely impact the state's water resources."

A senior DEC official recently said that the state could lose its authority to oversee pipelines if it improperly withholds approvals, and it has limited authority to reject pipelines. Jared Snyder, assistant DEC commissioner for air, climate and energy, also said the state has "limited authority over that broader energy question of whether the pipeline is needed."

The agency has been sitting on a growing pile of pipeline applications. Oversight of pipelines is generally a federal issue, but the state has to sign off on water certifications for the path of a pipeline when it crosses stream beds and wetlands.

The approval or rejection of the pipelines is one of the Cuomo administration's most prominent environmental decisions in the wake of the fracking ban announced a year ago.

Stockton said that even if the project is delayed, it will not be shelved.

"We've been working on this project for years," he said. "If we can't meet this in service date, we'll continue working on it as long as we can."

Constitution has already moved all of the actual pipeline into the state and is ready to begin construction as soon as its permits are approved.

Another application for a major pipeline will soon be filed. The Northeast Energy Direct would run from Pennsylvania to New England, crossing central and eastern New York. It is seen as a major source of natural gas for New England's growing market, which doesn't have adequate capacity to meet supply and has seen tremendous price spikes in recent years.

The state's independent grid operator has cautioned that the "lights will go out" if New York does not approve more pipelines. The head of the Public Service Commission has also said more pipelines are needed.

NY Post

Four degrees of global warming will submerge major cities

By Christine Burroni

November 9, 2015 | 9:01pm

These major cities may be sinking.

A study done by non-profit research organization Climate Central shows that even a seemingly minor temperature rise – 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit – on Earth will result in submerged cities around the world, and they've got the pictures to prove it.

"Two degrees Celsius warming will pose a long-term, existential danger to many great coastal cities and regions," lead author Ben Strauss, vice president for sea level and climate impacts at Climate Central, told AFP and explains that a four-degree spike would double the danger.

Renderings of the study show what major cities would look like at increases spanning 2 and 4 degrees Celsius. “There is a world of difference between 2 Celsius and 4 Celsius, which threatens more than double the damage,” said Strauss.

Although the increase in temperature would take place over the course of 200 years, the group’s research says it’s more likely that these striking scenes wouldn’t actually occur for another 2,000 years.

“It is easier to estimate how much ice will eventually melt from a certain amount of warming than how quickly it will melt,” said Strauss as these harrowing predictions are based on the expansion of ocean water as it warms, the melting of glaciers, and the decay of both the Greenland and West Antarctic icesheets.

The study found that Chinese cities – Shanghai, Tianjin, Hong Kong and Taizhou – are in for the worst as they’d be completely under water. Stateside, Miami and New Orleans would be the most affected.

Controlling the Earth’s temperature increase is the main goal of the United Nation’s climate summit taking place in Paris later this month.

NYT

Panel to Examine Tolls for New Tappan Zee Bridge

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS

NOV. 9, 2015

The New York State Thruway Authority announced on Monday that a new task force would examine whether to raise tolls for the crossing that is being built to replace the Tappan Zee Bridge.

The authority’s executive director, Robert L. Megna, said that tolls on the Tappan Zee would not increase in 2016, but that the seven-member panel would issue toll recommendations for the new bridge by the middle of next year.

“The New NY Bridge project has made tremendous progress, which anyone who drives over the Tappan Zee can see firsthand, and we will continue to work to find ways to keep tolls as low as possible for commuters,” said Mr. Megna, who is stepping down from his post in January to become a senior vice president at Stony Brook University.

The Tappan Zee Bridge, which carries the Thruway and connects Rockland and Westchester Counties, has a \$5 toll, compared with the \$14 toll on the George Washington Bridge from New Jersey to New York. Experts have long predicted that the construction of the \$3.9 billion replacement bridge would force the state to raise tolls, but by how much is unclear.

On Monday, Mr. Megna said that the new bridge was on track to fully open in 2018 as planned. Officials had expected to open the northern part of the double-span bridge first by December 2016, but that has been pushed back until at least spring 2017 because of logistical concerns, he said.

WSJ

Opinion / Commentary

The Climate Agenda Behind the Bacon Scare

The widely publicized warning about meat isn’t about health. It’s about fighting global warming.

By Julie Kelly And Jeff Stier

Ms. Kelly, a cooking instructor and food writer, lives in Orland Park, Ill. Mr. Stier leads the risk analysis division at the National Center for Public Policy Research in Washington, D.C.

Nov. 9, 2015 7:32 p.m. ET

Headlines blaring that processed and red meat causes cancer have made this steak-and-bacon-loving nation collectively reach for the Roloids. Vegans are in full party mode, and the media is in a feeding frenzy. But there is more to this story than meets the (rib)eye.

With United Nations climate talks beginning in a few weeks in Paris, the cancer warning seems particularly well timed. Environmental activists have long sought to tie food to the fight against global warming. Now the doomsayers who want to take on modern agriculture, a considerable source of greenhouse-gas emissions, can employ an additional scare tactic: Meat production sickens the planet; meat consumption sickens people.

Late last month, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)—part of the World Health Organization, an

arm of the U.N.—concluded that red meat, like beef and pork, is “probably carcinogenic” to humans, and that processed meat is an even greater cancer threat. The IARC placed foods like bacon, sausage and hot dogs in the same carcinogen category as cigarettes and plutonium.

The working group assessed “more than 800 epidemiological studies that investigated the association of cancer with consumption of red meat or processed meat in many countries.” But support for the IARC’s sweeping conclusion is flimsy at best.

First, the report largely addresses only one cancer—colorectal—while making passing mention of other cancers, like stomach and prostate. Yet the evidence linking red meat and colorectal cancer is unconvincing. The authors write that “positive associations were seen with high versus low consumption of red meat in half of those studies”—hardly enough conclusive evidence to justify a stern cancer warning.

The working group even admits in the same paper that “there is limited evidence for the carcinogenicity of the consumption of red meat” and “no clear association was seen in several of the high quality studies.” Despite this, the agency placed red meat in its second-highest carcinogen category, alongside DDT and the human papillomavirus, HPV.

The case against processed meat is dubious, too. According to the IARC report, each 50-gram portion of processed meat eaten daily increases the risk of colorectal cancer by 18%. That might sound scary, but the absolute risk is what really matters. As an example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 2% of 40-year-olds will develop colorectal cancer over the next 30 years of their lives. What the IARC study suggests is a slightly higher rate—say, 2.4% over 30 years—for those 40-year-olds who tear through a 16-ounce package of bacon every week without fail.

A doctor with the IARC acknowledged in a news release announcing the findings that “for an individual, the risk of developing colorectal cancer because of their consumption of processed meat remains small.” But that statement—widely overlooked in most media coverage—didn’t stop the agency from putting processed meat in its highest category of carcinogens, alongside mustard gas and formaldehyde.

Sensationalist reporting makes processed meat sound more dangerous than even the IARC report claims. A headline at NBC News reads: “Ham, Sausages Cause Cancer; Red Meat Probably Does, Too, WHO Group Says.” Another by the national desk at Cox Media Group runs: “Bacon poses same cancer risk as cigarettes, world health group claims.” This is a case where many journalists and policy makers fail to give proper scrutiny to claims that advance the prevailing political narrative. When a report advises eating less meat, few bother to check the facts, because the conclusion is already popular among them and assumed true.

Now we get to the connection between climate alarmism and the meat-is-bad movement. In advance of the Paris climate talks, the World Health Organization released a lengthy report about climate pollutants and global health risks. The section on agriculture discusses the need to direct consumers away from foods whose production emits high levels of greenhouse gases: “A key action with large potential climate and health benefits is to facilitate a shift away from high-GHG foods—many of which are of animal origin—and towards healthy, low-GHG (often plant-based) alternatives.”

The report specifically mentions red and processed meat: “In affluent populations, shifting towards diets based on careful adherence to public health recommendations—including reduced consumption of red and processed meat and/or other animal-sourced foods in favor of healthier plant-based alternatives—has the potential to both reduce GHG emissions and improve population health.”

How would this shift in consumers’ tastes be produced? “Experimental and modeling studies demonstrate that food pricing interventions have the ability to influence food choice,” the report states, before favorably citing a study in the United Kingdom of “taxing all food and drinks with above-average GHG emissions.”

Much of this is aimed at the U.S., which is the world’s top producer of beef and its third-largest producer of pork. Americans, along with Australians and Argentines, are among the world’s biggest per capita meat-eaters. Now climate busybodies can shout that meat causes cancer and is as bad for the person eating it as it is for the planet.

In other words, meat is a double threat that governments should contain. Hang on to your T-bones and sausages, folks.

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